

Coal Mines of the Lafayette Area

MINE LOCATIONS

The names and dates of operation are listed for each mine. Mines sometimes changed names with new owners so several names are listed.

EXTENT OF MINING

Records of mine locations and the extent of mining were maintained by the State of Colorado for reasons of taxation, property ownership, and mineral rights. For this reason, it is possible to map—at least approximately—where mining took place. We say approximately because it was not unusual for mine owners to "poach" coal outside the limits of their mineral rights along the edges of the mine. It is nearly impossible to establish now how much poaching took place and in what areas.

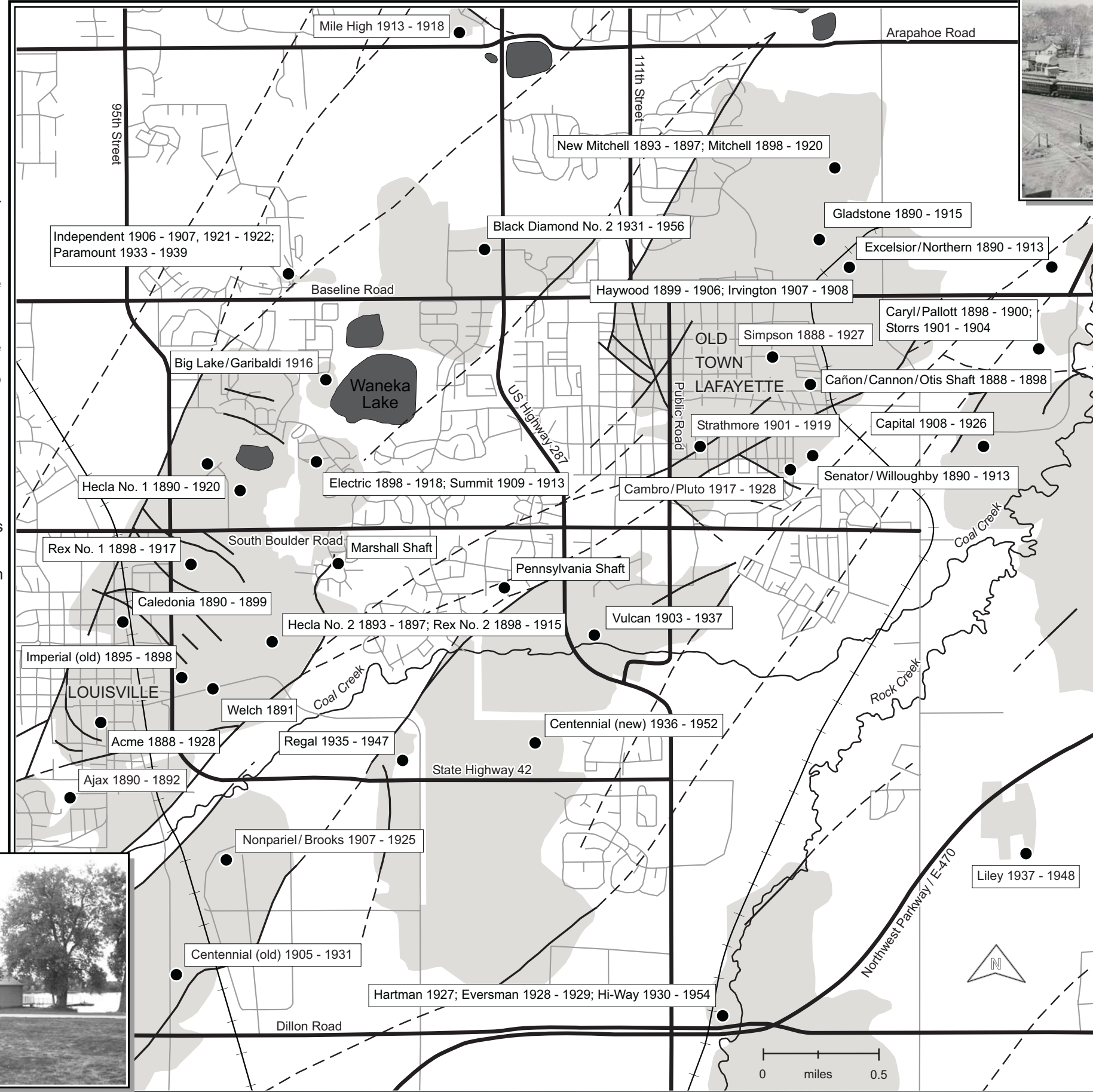
Mines extended under almost all of Old Town Lafayette as well as areas of more recent development. Fortunately, the mines in the Lafayette area were deep enough and the layers above the mines stable enough that subsidence has not been a major problem.

FAULTS

The faults shown on this map are underground in the coal seams and are rarely visible at the surface. Faults in the coal seams often limited production because mining across a fault could involve retunneling and repositioning of equipment. Many mines stopped when faults were encountered.



The Waneka Lake power plant was a local landmark for over half a century. Put into operation in 1907 and maintained as a substation after the Valmont generating station was opened, the Waneka plant was closed in 1957 and demolished in the 1960s. The Waneka Lake boathouse (right) is now on the site of the power plant.



The photo above gives a view west over Lafayette from atop the Simpson mine in about 1915. East Cleveland Street runs west near the left edge of the photo. The old business district along East Simpson Street is visible in the center of the photo. Today's Cleveland Street (below) shows no evidence of the Simpson mine or of the rail lines that once ran through town.



Some of the residential and commercial buildings visible in the 1915 photo (top) remain part of Lafayette's townscape. One example (below) at 600 E. Simpson was built about 1892 and was used for many decades as a boarding house for miners. It appears just to the right of the center of the 1915 photo.



Historic Preservation Board
City of Lafayette, Colorado